(a) whether Government is aware that the future of agriculture in our country is bleak since it has become non-profitable for our agriculturists with the escalation of cost of irrigation, fertilizer and seeds on the one hand and the absence of remunerative prices for the produce on the other; and

(b) if so, the reaction of Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (PROF. K.V. THOMAS): (a) and (b) The Government of India is implementing the National Policy for Farmers, 2007 witn an objective to improve economic viability of farming by substantially increasing the net income of the farmers and to ensure that agriculture progress is measured by advances made in this income. The policy provisions, *inter alia*, include supply of good quality seeds and disease-free; planting material, issue of soil health passbooks to the farmers to facilitate application of integrated pest management and integrated nutrient management system. Another measure is the announcements of Minimum Support Prices (MSP). The Government's price policy for agricultural commodities seeks to ensure remunerative prices to the growers for their produce with a view to encourage higher investment and production. The Government decides on the support price for various agricultural commodities taking into account the recommendations of the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP). The CACP while recommending the MSP for various agricultural crops takes into account the cost of all kinds of inputs at their prevailing rates which also included seeds, fertilizers and irrigation charges etc. Substantial increase in the MSP of major cereals ranging from 49% to 78% was provided during the last 5 years. MSPs of pulses & oilseeds were enhanced by up to 83% during the same period.

Loss of fertility of agriculture land

†150. SHRI PRAKASH JAVADEKAR: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that according to State of Environment Report-2009 by Government, most of the fertile land in the country is losing its fertility continuously due to increasing use of fertilizers and pesticides;

(b) if so, the steps taken by Government for land conservation;

(c) whether the fertilizers and pesticides used for agriculture in the country are not of good quality;

(d) if so, the measures taken by Government to improve the quality of fertilizers; and

(e) if not, the reasons for the loss of fertile land?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (PROF. K.V. THOMAS): (a) The State of Environment Report 2009 has identified several factors for land degradation including indiscriminate use of agrochemicals such as fertilizers and pesticides.

(b) The Government has implemented several schemes enabling land conservation. Under the National Project for Management of Soil Health and Fertility there is provision for setting of Soil Testing Laboratories to promote balanced use of fertilizers. The Government is also promoting Integrated Pest Management (IPM) for control of pests with judicious use of pesticides.

(c) to (e) The Government regulates the quality of fertilizers through Fertilizer Control Order, 1985 which prohibits the manufacture, import, storage and sale of non-standard fertilizers. The fertilizers which meet the prescribed standards are allowed for manufacture, import and sale. Similarly, quality control of pesticides is administered under the provisions of the Insecticides Act, 1968 *inter alia* through regular sampling of pesticides from manufacturing units as well as pesticide dealers.

Rich yield of fruits

151. SHRI KALRAJ MISHRA:
SHRI BHAGIRATHI MAJHI:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether country is likely to get a rich exportable fruit yield this year, including pineapple, apple, mangoes and oranges;

(b) if so, the expected yield this year compared to last three years; and

(c) the quantity of fruit and fruit products expected to be exported this year as compared to last three years?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (PROF. K.V. THOMAS): (a) and (b) The available data on production of various fruits for the period from 2005-06 to 2007-08 and that for the year 2008-09 indicates that there has been consistent increase in overall production of fruits. The details are given in the enclosed Statement (*See* below).

(c) The export of fresh fruits and Vegetables and processed fruits and vegetables during the last three years is as under :

Quantity : Mts Value : Rs lakhs

	2006-07		2007-08		2008-09*	
	Qty.	Val.	Qty.	Val.	Qty.	Val.
Fruits	347660	87188	365732	91185	394484	91606
Processed Fruits & Vegetables	474903	146134	478509	147250	513187	193551
TOTAL :	822563	233322	844241	238435	907671	285157

*April 2008 to Feb 2009

Source : DGCIS